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For Immediate Release

GED DIPLOMA BOOSTS EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS

(DES MOINES, IOWA) – October 13, 2005– Adults who complete a General Education Development (GED) program in Iowa are finding they earn more than a “high school equivalent” diploma – they earn strength and hope.

That’s the message from Donna Clough, 58, of Dubuque, recipient of the “Outstanding Adult Learner” award at the Iowa Association of Lifelong Learning banquet tonight in Iowa City. Clough, who dropped out of high school in 1963 to join the military, struggled through 40 years of limited job skills and employment before a potential employer encouraged her to seek a GED to boost her hiring prospects.

Statistics show that obtaining a GED can increase not only employability, but also earning ability. [United States Census Bureau](#) data shows that persons with a minimum high school education are more likely to have full-time, year-round employment, and will earn an average annual salary of \$30,640 compared to an average \$22,232 for those who have not completed a high school education.

About 4,700 adults in Iowa passed the GED battery of tests in 2004. The state’s 98 percent pass rate is the highest in the nation and can be attributed to the strong GED instructional programs offered at each of the state’s 15 community colleges.

“The instructors are extremely devoted to helping their students succeed,” said Clough, who completed the program in seven months. She said it was difficult to relearn study habits, but the community college staff provided support and encouragement when she got frustrated.

“They told me quitting was not an option,” she said.

GED instructors know the value of a GED diploma and work hard to reach out to students, said John Hartwig, GED Administrator in the Iowa Department of Education. “In addition to stronger job skills, participants gain confidence, independence and overall quality of life.”

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Clough agrees. “I had so much anxiety and was sure I would fail, as I had before,” she said. “I was so excited the first time I took a test and scored high. I thought, ‘Now I can read!’ and it gave me the confidence to keep going through the other tests.

The state’s GED program is administered through Iowa’s 15 community colleges and coordinated through the Iowa Department of Education. To find the GED coordinator for each community college, call 515/281-3636.

Iowa’s 15 community colleges provide a wide variety of [adult literacy instructional programs](#) to assist adult learners. In addition to the [GED program](#), adult students can:

- Become proficient in understanding and speaking English.
- Develop job knowledge and skills.
- Enhance knowledge or skills to maintain employment.
- Assist adults to become effective parents and full partners in the educational development of their children.

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